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SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN REGIONAL AIRPORT SECURITY IMPROVING

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In early October, Embassy RSO and Poloff traveled to three regional airports to meet Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and aviation security (AVINOR) personnel and to develop performance standards for future Embassy assessments of Norwegian airport security. The Norwegian CAA and AVINOR are busy tightening procedures for carry-on items and baggage screening in accord with EC regulations. AVINOR plans to extend critical security restrictions to all baggage zones at commercial airports by 2009. Several airports are planning further extensions of critical security zones. AVINOR receives good support from the Norwegian government for its security upgrade programs and is working to broaden acceptance of new procedures among existing airport employees. END SUMMARY

¶2. (SBU) On October 5, Embassy officers met with the Norwegian Civil Aviation Administration (CAA) Director General Mr. Heine Richardsen and Head of Security Ms. Bjorg Ulset to discuss the CAA's role in security regulation development and implementation. Ulset explained that the CAA's security regulations are derived from ICAO Annex 17 and EC Regulation 2320. As part of the EFTA group of countries, Norway is obliged to conform with EC aviation safety regulations. When changes are required, the CAA issues and distributes implementing regulations to appropriate authorities. Just prior to our meeting, the CAA finalized new regulations for carry-on liquids and gels in accord with recent EC aviation directives.

TIGHTENING PASSENGER AND FACILITY SECURITY

¶3. (SBU) Norway screens all passengers and carry-on baggage prior to entering airport gate areas, coats and jackets must be removed, and laptops and electronics must be taken out of their cases. As of the first week of November, passengers must put any liquids or gels in clear plastic bags no more than one liter in size, amounts of liquid are limited to 100ml. Liquid containing bags will be subject to random examination. Surprisingly, we learned that non-ticketed persons are allowed into gate waiting areas at some airports provided they pass through security checks. Norway follows EC regulations that require reconciling the identity of those checking baggage onto flights with the identity of those who board flights. Regarding in-flight security measures, CAA Security Director Ulset stated that Norway may be willing to reopen discussions on a U.S. Federal Air Marshal program.

¶4. (SBU) Improvements to airport facility security are being planned as well. On January 1, 2006, Norway established Security Restricted Areas (SRAs) at air terminals, limiting

access to sensitive areas to personnel carrying electronic keycards. Norway also established Critical Security Restricted Areas (CSRAs) in sensitive areas around terminals and gates. To enter and exit these areas, employees must undergo physical searches. In 2009, these CSRAs will be expanded to include all areas where baggage travels to comply with EC Regulation 1138 (2004). Oslo Gardermoen airport already has a CSRA system around its entire perimeter and we were told that most commercial airports have plans to expand CSRAs around their perimeters by 2009.

AVINOR AND THE AIRPORTS

¶5. (SBU) AVINOR is the state-owned company responsible for airport operations and security as well as air traffic control systems. We met with AVINOR officials to discuss security procedures and how these procedures have altered operations. AVINOR officials expressed some concerns over difficulties they have in getting airport personnel to accept these new security procedures. Long-time employees who have never gone through physical searches do not welcome the new procedures associated with SRAs and CSRAs. Recently the Norwegian pilot's union complained publicly about being "distracted" by frequent physical searches when moving in and out of gate areas. Despite these work culture adjustments, AVINOR officials told us that they are receiving good support and adequate funding from the Norwegian government and that their upgrade programs are continuing.

¶6. (SBU) In discussions at regional airports we learned more about plans for implementing CSRAs. Oslo-Gardermoen has a CSRA in place around its entire perimeter. AVINOR officials in Trondheim/Vaernes (the third busiest airport in Norway after Oslo-Gardermoen and Bergen) were proud to tell us that they became the second airport to create a perimeter CSRA on March 1, 2006. In Bodo, AVINOR officials are searching for

ways to configure their airport to meet CSRA requirements by ¶2009. The main obstacle in Bodo is that the runway is shared with an adjacent Norwegian Air Force base that provides over 180 degrees of perimeter protection. This military-commercial use situation is shared by several other airports in Norway and AVINOR told us that accommodating civilian and military needs will likely mean adjusting CSRA requirements. Tromso has plans for major airport expansion. Unfortunately, the airport has limited opportunity for growth since it sits on the edge of a peninsula and abuts a business and residential district. AVINOR officials in Tromso are currently occupied with perimeter security changes (new security fencing, new secure entrances, and extension of the CSRA into baggage handling areas) and acknowledged difficulties in creating a true CSRA around the entire perimeter as one runway ends at the fjord's shoreline.

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: The CAA and AVINOR are working to

improve security standards at Norwegian airports. Post now has some measurable standards with which to gauge AVINOR's progress. We also have a better understanding of the relationship between the CAA, AVINOR, and the regional airports. The establishing CSRAs in regional airports by 2009 is ambitious, and gives us a metric to use in follow-up assessments. Post will continue to follow-up with the CAA and AVINOR on their implementation of their airport security upgrade programs. END COMMENT
JOHNSON